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New Fibre Plant Is Very Old in Yucatan.

Mexicans Try to Keep Production to Themselves.

Most Interesting Report Comes From the American Consul at Progresso.

Interest in the growth of sisal fibre is not confined to Hawaii, although there is great interest being taken in it here, because there is felt here the need for the growing of by-products to sugar, as an economical measure to the development of the resources of the territory. So great is the interest in fact, that as chronicled in the Advertiser some little time ago, the Oahu Railway Company is about to devote the major portion of its lands to the production of sisal-and, more than that, stands ready to enter into an agreement to furnish plants and start small farmers on the growing of sisal on shares.

'And what is sisal, about which there Thompson, American Consul at Progresso, Mexico, in a report to the State Department, says of sisal: "Sisal sisal, are the various commercial terms applied to a fibre that is neither grass nor hemp, and that is not produced to any great extent in Sisal. The name 'sisal' was applied to it because it originally reached the outside world through the port of that name."

Sisal, for many years past-or, at Sarsaparilla least, the bulk of the Yucatan product -now comes to market through the an old house with an estab. port of Progresso, where Mr. Thompson is consul. Speaking it, he says all parts of the city and Waikiki. further in his report: "The agave is one of the most characteristic plants of Mexico. One of the family, the asolidated Soda Water Works Agave americana, products the pulque, the intoxicating drink of the country. Great fields are covered with this plant upon the Mexican table-land, and long "pulque trains." like the milk trains of the United States, roll

> BABIES AND CHILDREN should be fairly plump. They ought to put on fat as fast as they use it up; for fat is fuel, and the burning of it makes pow-er and force. Thin children— even along to the age of eighteen or twenty-are in danger from consumption, and from other wasting complaints. The children who starve, and the young men and women who are consumed-why, the very idea of it is frightful. For such as they there is always what the Bible calls a "mighty famine" in the land. Food, though it may be taken plentifully, does not nourish them. It makes no fat; it gives no strength. To prevent this, to cure this, to save the young ones at the mother's knees, and the bright boys and girls who are just looking at the world with ambitious eyes, is the purpose of

WAMPOLE'S PREPARATION. Its success is decided and settled. Thousands owe to it life and health. It is palatable as honey and contains the nutritive and curative properties of Pure Cod Liver Oil, extracted by us from fresh cod livers, combined with the Compound Syrup of Hypophosphites and the Extracts of Malt and Wild Cherry. In building up pale, puny, emaciated children, particularly those troubled with Anemia, Scrofula, Rickets, and bone and blood diseases, nothing equals it; its tonic qualities are of the highest order. A Medical Institution says: "We have used your preparation in treating children for coughs, colds and inflammation; its application has never failed us in any case, even the most aggravated bordering on pneumonia. The children like it, they love the taste of it, it looks good to them, and it builds up their bodies; many little children

the pulque plant and one of the fibre long and wide lanes are formed beplant are very similar in appearance. tween the rows that facilitate cutting Both show the same peculiar green, and carriage of the leaves, and also the same many-thorned leaves; in- lessen the wounding of the leaves by vestigation, however, soon shows the the spines and thorns of their neigh-

of the cultivated plant-the yaxci, or baled.

the sisal hemp of commerce.

ropes and cords,

The fibre of the cahum is long and workers start the flames in an illis at present so much talk? E. H. silky, but even scantier in quantity cleaned field, and nothing but a mirathan that of the chelem, and it is said cle can save the crop from total loss.

York. It found a market, but the of their country made common. price was such that there was but scant gain for the seller. The methods recognizing the great need of a suit- of.' able machine to clean the fibre, offerfriar, which was used for many years. Today, half a dozen machines are in the market, some of them marvels of design and potency.

"A thin, rocky, limestone soil is generally supposed to be the best for he growth of the sacci plant. Experence indicates that the fibre grown upon this class of soil has a percenage of tensile strength greater than that produced on the richer lands, though the last is more flexible and is longer. The percentage of safety allowed by the cordage makers 's so high that I doubt if the diminished tensile strength of the rich-land hemp would seriously affect the quality of the output. Contrary to the general idea, a poor sandy soil is not congenial to the growth of a large, full-sized fitre plant. Few if any good-sized, well-formed plants grow very near the coast line. The best Yucatan fibre

plant seems to be produced in a zone or belt following the coast, about 12 miles away from it and 70 miles wide. "The plant can be propagated in various ways-by seeds, by cuttings, and by scions, or suckers. The firstmentioned method is now never undortaken. Very few of the abundant seeds are fertile, and the time lost in raising the seedlings is great. The second method-by cuttings-is frequently undertaken; the top of an old, nearly worn-out plant is taken just before the long pole that should bear the flowers shoots up. It is cut off and trimmed of all save the newest leaves and then planted in the ground as though it were a scion. These plants are said to produce earlier than others. The general method, however, of producing a field of the sisal plant is as follows: A field is cut and the refuse burned; then a month or so before the rainy season the "hijos." or scions of sisal, that have sprouted unowe their lives to it." Effective der the shelter of the parent plant are from the first dose. "You cannot rooted out of the ground, when they der the shelter of the parent plant are be disappointed in it." Sold by |get to be 18 or 20 inches high, and chemists here and everywhere, thrown is a heap. There they lie for

taxation, the right to an appe

daily into Mexico City. This bever- two or three months exposed to the age is practically unknown to the in- sun and the weather. Just before the habitants of Yucatan, and the agave rainy season, when they seem to be that produces it is to be seen only as dried up and decayed, they are caran exotic in the gardens and parks, ried to the cleared fields and planted Its place is taken by another member in rows. Formerly, they so planted of the family, whose importance is the young plants that they were sepmore far reaching. The Agave sisal- arated by spaces of barely 2 yards, but easis furnishes a fibre that not only of late years it has been found best helps to knit firmer the commerce of to space them so that they will be in the whole world, but binds the sheaves lines, each plant separated from the of wheat so that the price of bread in one preceding it by a space of 1 1-2 every land is made cheaper for its use. yards and the lines 4 yards apart "To the casual observer a field of (about 1,100 plants to the acre). Thus, bors.

"There are three known varieties of "Previous to 1889 but little attempt the species growing wild in the for- was made to grade the hemp. Yaxci, ests of Yucatan-the chelem, the ca- sacci, short staple, long staple-all hum, and the citamci-and I think went as "sisal." Now, a fine, white that I have found a fourth wild vari-libre, well cleaned and baled, can comety during my explorations in the in- mand a notably better price than terior. There are also two varieties mixed fibre, ill-cleaned and badly

green fibre, and the sacci, or white "Fire is its greatest enemy. Hot fibre. The last-named plant is the seasons do not affect it. In fact, the most cultivated and the one producing heat of the sun, especially when accompanied by dampness, seems to act "The primeval inhabitants probably as a tonic. It is then, if ever, that did not at first attempt to extract the the plant recovers from its injuries. fibre from the thick pulp, but took the The greatest heat experienced in Yuleaf and wilted it in the fire, then split catan for the last ten years was in it, and used the splits as thongs. The July, 1900, when the thermometer leaves so treated make thongs of reached 119 degrees F. in the half oak bedroom set, parlor furniture, great strength, and as they dry they shade of a veranda; 147 degrees F. has bind with wonderful force. In the been experienced in the sun on the primitive forms of habitation in the principal street of Merida. Long wardrobe, sideboard, extension table, region, the mud and wattle "nas" are droughts may delay its development, bound together by these shreds of and by wilting the mature leaves fibre-wilted leaves. They are shapely, cause them to double and injure the water-tight, and durable, and the na- fibre, but it can not stop the ultimate tive builder's only tool is a heavy, growth of the healthy plant, once it is sharp-edged knife. Not a spike or nail well rooted. Rainy seasons do not or metal of any kind enters into the seriously affect the plants, except those in stagnant water. This weak-"Later the people found that if they ens the plant, but this condition is cleaned off the thick pulp and the not common. Cold seasons of the green corrosive juice they could get kind that Yucatan experiences do not a firmer hold and so bind tighter. seriously affect the plant. The cold-Then they learned to twist the shreds, est known period was in February, and this idea led to the making of 1899, when the thermometer registered 47 degrees F.

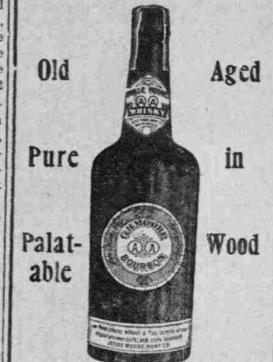
"The wild agave, known as the But fire conquers it. Let a spark chelem, is, I believe, the progenitor of from a locomotive, the lighted end of the cultivated sacci. The fibre is of a cigarette, or the embers of a fire good quality, but scant in quantity. made to heat the bread of the native It is said that some planters in the "Attention was turned toward the past have taken advantage of the sus- building known as the Odd Fellows fibre concealed in the leaf of the hene- ceptibility of the plant to artificial Hall, situated on Fort street, near grass, sisal hemp, henequen, or simply quen, and in 1839 a kind of association heat; and when young plants were was formed to make the experiment desired for export, they were doctored of producing the coarser fiber "sacci" before delivery by having their roots Thirty days time for removal of buildon a commercial basis. It was known heated over heated embers or dipped ings. that the spiny-edged agave called sacci into boiling water. The effects of this produced a fibre coarser than that of treatment are not perceptible for a the yaxel, but much more abundant, time, and possibly this fact may make and consequently more profitable to clear to some enthusiastic foreign cultivate, as the fibre then sold by planter why his scions, purchased weight and not by quality. The fibre with so much care and expense, never was cleaned by native instruments, grew and prospered. Naturally, the ard, packed in loose bales of about Mexicans do not desire to have the 200 pounds each, was sent to New plant that is such a valuable product

"Next to fire, a large black beetle is the greatest enemy of the cultivated of cleaning the fibre were so slow that sisal. This large, long-nosed insect, even with the small wages of the day known to the natives as the "max," the cost per pound to the planter was may also attack the wild varieties, but discouraging. The State government, I have not yet found evidence there-

The output of Yutacan sisal for the ed a gratuity of \$10,000 Mexican to the two years, 1901 and 1902, was 564,308 person inventing an apparatus capa- bales, weighing 90,005.3 tons and of ble of producing a stated output per the value of \$13,538,343 in American hour. This finally resulted in the money. There will be a falling off in "raspador," the device of a Franciscan the supply for 1903, however, and that despite the fact that prices are good and the demand for the fibre is increasing. The cause of the shortage will be that the Mexicans are not planting new areas. There is a scarcity of labor in Yucatan, and the planters do not like to stop cleaning fibre long enough to replant old fields and plant new ones. It is the usual Mexican improvidence, which should be a part of Hawaii's opportunity.

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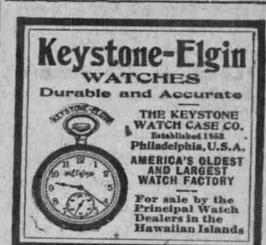
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